

100.731: Colonial African History (French African Empire)
Graduate Seminar
Fall 2015

Professor: Pier M. Larson
Office: 338C Gilman Hall
Office Hours: T&Th 4:30-5:30
Class Meets: Tuesdays 11-1

Brief Description

This is a reading seminar in the history of French African Empire. We will read a variety of professional monographs published over the last decade that consider the history of French colonies in Africa. Most of the work focuses on the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and on West, Saharan, and North Africa, with a few exceptions to these parameters. The purpose of the seminar is not to provide you with a comprehensive overview of French African history, but to introduce you to some of the variety of historical research and writing that has been conducted over the last decade, examining significant features and concerns of that historiography. Where will things go next?

It is essential that each student fully read the assigned book before class and be prepared to discuss it. Please bring to class a short informal paper of one page (single spaced, a bit more if you desire but not necessary) in which you informally discuss the argument of the work, the evidence on which it is based, and approximately four questions you could raise in the seminar. You can also discuss links to other works we or you have read, and jot down any other comments you have. The questions should be discussion-type questions rather than informational ones. Do not worry about your grammar, spelling, and the like. This is to be a species of notes for yourself that will assist you in the discussion. However, I would like you to bring a hard copy of your informal paper to the class and leave me with that copy at the end. This allows me to see your informal thinking process.

Assigned writing 1: each student should pick two weeks in the schedule, below, and for each week, report to the class in writing (~5 pages, double spaced) on an additional book paired with that week's reading (the author's names of permissible books for this purpose are in parentheses in the schedule following the assigned book for the week; the bibliography of these works will be circulated separately). This will allow you to exercise some measure of choice in which weeks and books you review. Each student should review a different book. You should circulate your book reports by email before class so everyone can have the benefit of your work. You will be asked to talk in class about the extra book you reviewed.

Assigned writing 2: Each student will also produce another paper of at least 20 pages, the content and structure of which will be individual and geared to your research or pedagogical interests, and determined in discussion with me.

The books to be read, in order:

- Osborn, Emily Lynn. *Our New Husbands are Here: Households, Gender, and Politics in a West African State from the Slave Trade to Colonial Rule* (Athens, Oh.: Ohio University Press, 2011).
- Clancy-Smith, Julia. *Mediterraneans: North Africa and Europe in an Age of Migration, c. 1800-1900* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2011).
- Lydon, Ghislaine. *On Trans-Saharan Trails: Islamic Law, Trade Networks, and Cross-Cultural Exchange in Nineteenth-Century Western Africa* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- Lewis, Mary Dewhurst. *Divided Rule: Sovereignty and Empire in French Tunisia, 1881-1938* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 2014).
- Duke Bryant, Kelly M. *Education as Politics: Colonial Schooling and Political Debate in Senegal, 1850s-1914* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 2015).
- Brower, Benjamin. *A Desert Named Peace: The Violence of France's Empire in the Algerian Sahara, 1844-1902* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).
- Roberts, Richard. *Litigants and Households: African Disputes and Colonial Courts in the French Soudan, 1895-1912* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2005). [Note: there are no electronic copies of this book]
- Peterson, Brian J. *Islamization from Below: The Making of Muslim Communities in Rural French Sudan, 1880-1960* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2011).
- Cooper, Barbara M. *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2006).
- Cooper, Frederick. *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945-1960* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2014).
- Mann, Gregory. *From Empires to NGOs in the West African Sahel: The Road to Nongovernmentality* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
- Scheele, Judith. *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara: Regional Connectivity in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Schedule: Meetings & Readings:

- Sept 1 Larson, "Fragments of an Indian Ocean Life" & Lydon, "Saharan Oceans and Bridges"
- Sept 8 Osborn, *Our New Husbands are Here*
(Burrill, Jean-Baptiste)
- Sept 15 Clancy-Smith, *Mediterraneans*
(Davis, Vaughan)
- Sept 22 Lydon, *On Trans-Saharan Trails*
(Hall, Larson, Warren)
- Sept 29 Lewis, *Divided Rule*
(Conklin, Keller, Genova)
- Oct 6 Duke-Bryant, *Education as Politics*
(Hélénon, Jones, Saada, Robinson, Klein, Roberts)
- Oct 13 Brower, *A Desert Named Peace*
(Evans, Trumbull, Gosnell)
- Oct 20 Roberts, *Litigants and Households*
(Bassett, Martin, Rich, Semley, White)
- Oct 27 Peterson, *Islamization from Below*
(Babou, Hanretta, Soares)
- Nov 3 Cooper, B., *Evangelical Christians in the Muslim Sahel*
(Alidou, Masquelier)
- Nov 10 Cooper, F., *Citizenship between Empire and Nation*
(Chafer, F. Cooper, Ginio, Lawrence, McDougall, Schmidt, Shepard, Wilder)
- Nov 17 Mann, *From Empires to NGOs*
(Beusekom, Mann, Piot, Straker, Winders)
- Dec 1 Scheele, *Smugglers and Saints of the Sahara*
(Crapanzano)